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THE HON MARK BUTLER MP
MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND AGEING
MINISTER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION
MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER ON MENTAL HEALTH REFORM

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 13 February 2012 regarding a petition seeking that Wonthaggi be included in the new round of **headspace** centres to be placed in rural areas.

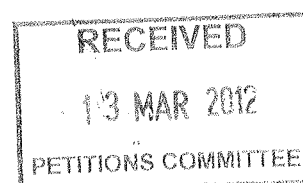
I note the petition was presented on 13 February 2012 and considered at a recent meeting of the Standing Committee on Petitions. Under Standing Order 209 (b), as the Minister responsible for the administration of the matter raised in the petition, I am responding within 90 days of its presentation.

I appreciate the level of community interest that has emerged about the successful **headspace** model and that many communities are keen to have a site established in their area. The locations of future **headspace** sites will be identified by the Australian Government and **headspace**, in consultation with the state and territory governments and other key stakeholders, on the basis of community need, youth populations, access to existing services and local capacity. The strong community support for a **headspace** site in Wonthaggi, as evidenced by the recent petition, has been noted.

I would like to advise you that in addition to the roll-out of further **headspace** sites, a telephone and web-based support service for young people building on the **headspace** platform has also recently begun providing services. **eheadspace** provides free, confidential and anonymous counselling services to young people between the ages of 12 and 25 years with, or at risk of developing, a mild to moderate mental illness. This service is an alternative approach for young people to access support and help, particularly for young people living in harder to reach areas, such as more regional and remote parts of Australia. **eheadspace** can be contacted at www.eheadspace.org.au or on 1800 650 890 (free call).

I would appreciate it if you would convey this information to the next meeting of the Standing Committee on Petitions.

Yours sincerely
Mark Butler



MARK BUTLER 29 FEB 2012